Euroforum

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Alms, not arms, appeal by Willy Brandt

Former West German Chancellor Willy Brandt called for a 'radical reform' of the world's economy to eradicate poverty and famine in developing countries during the European Parliament's September session in Strasbourg.

He said the European Community should play a leading role in the forthcoming North-South talks between the world's rich and poor nations.

There was a 'depression and grotesque' contrast, he said, between the world arms bill which amounts to 150 million dollars daily and the limited help given to struggling nations.

'It is technically possible for the first time for the world to destroy itself. It should also be technically possible for the world to solve its hunger problem', he declared.

World hunger dominated the five-day session of the Parliament and Mr Brandt dominated the one and a half day debate. The former Chancellor was speaking as a Socialist Euro MP but also as chairman of the international Commission on World Poverty which reported earlier this year.

Ie chided western nations for failing to match the United Nations target for spending on development aid. Investment by the rich in the poor countries of 0.7 per cent of national product was 'an essential starting point', he said.

Euro MPs went on to approve a series of more than 50 proposals for increased action by the Community and its Member States. They were set out in a resolution presented by Italian Communist member Bruno Ferrero for the Parliament's Committee on Development and Cooperation.

Mr Ferrero said the worsening world situation meant that the time had come to abandon the usual charitable approach to development aid. The Community should adopt a new strategy for fighting poverty and hunger.

According to United Nations figures presented to the Parliament, 450 million people in the Third World were undernourished in 1978.

By the end of the century, according to the World Bank, over 700 million people could be living in absolute poverty.

The motion passed by the 410-member Parliament called for a 'new, more equitable system of international relations'.

Industrialized countries would have to accept 'far-reaching adjustments' to their 'production methods and way of life'.

The Parliament also called for a wholesale transfer of spending on arms to development aid and a 'massive transfer' of technology and funds to poor countries.

Members also demanded a steep increase in European Community food aid by 1982 to 2.5 million tonnes, one-fifth of the estimated world need.

The Community's Development commissioner Claude Cheysson promised a Commission study of the impact of the Common Agricultural Policy on international trade in food.

In some respects, he said, the Community already led the field in improving relations between rich and poor nations. Apart from food aid, the Community guaranteed stable export earnings for many developing nations.

But Mr Cheysson conceded that a vast amount of work still needed to be undertaken. The Community would have to consider whether it could guarantee fixed prices for Third World goods.

Prosperous pockets cannot survive in today's world

by Willy Brandt

Chairman of the Independent Commission on International Development Issues

In recent months—indeed for years now—we have become increasingly conscious of the close interaction between East-West and North-South issues. We are realizing that what happens in 'remote' parts of the world also has a direct impact on Europe.

Events in Iran and Afghanistan—and in the Middle East, South East Asia,, Southern Africa and Central America —have dramatically spotlighted the need to see that the balance of interests between North and South, between industrialized and developing countries, is just as important as detente in an active policy for the pursuit of peace.

The world is starting to recognize that peace is not only menaced by power rivalries and conflicts between extreme ideologies but that the future of mankind is threatened just as much by mass starvation, economic collapse and ecological disaster. It is a dangerous illusion to think that fenced-off pockets of prosperity and security can survive indefinitely in an age when one-fifth of the world's population, concentrated mainly in the Southern hemisphere, is suffering from starvation and malnutrition.

At the beginning of this year the European Parliament, at the instigation of its Committee on Development and Cooperation, convened an official hearing in Brussels on world famine at which I was able to speak about the report prepared by the Independent Commission on International Development Issues under my Chairmanship. Initial exchanges of views on the report on North-South relations have also taken place in the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly and in the parliaments of a number of Member States of the Community—for instance, at the end of March, in the British House of Commons and, at the end of April, in the German Bundestag. The Commission of the European Communities is also to make an in-depth examination of the report with a view to framing practical proposals.

All this goes to show that Europe acknowledges its duty to act as a factor for peace and equilibrium on the world scene. Greater efforts are needed, however, to give North-South issues greater prominence in the European Parliament, to foster public awareness through the media and, jointly with the representatives of the major social groupings—the unions, the Church, youth organizations—to make the Governments of the Member States put forward proposals that may help to find a solution to this vital social issue of the late twentieth century.

In the Independent Commission's report we have therefore tried to frame recommendations on the focal areas of North-South relations, taking as our main theme common interests and international solidarity. Four targets are considered to be priorities for the five years ahead:

Firstly, through a massive infusion of resources, both the poorest countries in Africa and Asia and the 'middle income countries' should be given the chance to develop their own economic momentum or pursue their economic growth, as the case may be.

It will therefore be necessary for those industrialized countries that have made the commitment and are able to meet it to allocate 0.7% of their Gross National Product to official development assistance by 1985. If the industrialized Eastern-bloc countries and better-off developing countries also contributed their share to this transfer of resources, this drive could be even more effective.

Energy is the second priority sector, with particular emphasis on oil. Regular oil supplies with foreseeable price trends must be suitably combined with the promotion of energy saving measures and the simultaneous development of alternative sources—carried out in such a way that the oil-exporting countries can participate fully in research and development.

Thirdly, food production in all countries which in recent years have become dependent on imports must be significantly stepped up. All misery that cannot be remedied speedily by programmes to promote agricultural production must be alleviated by increased food aid (and the signing within the near future of an international grains arrangement).

Finally, serious steps must be taken to reform international economic, currency and financial relations, to be accompanied by national measures on the part of the developing countries.

A critical assessment should also be made of existing international organizations.

Giant conferences are scarcely a suitable means of attaining the targets I have outlined. Experience has shown that often they only produce intransigent blocs leaving no leeway for negotiation.

It is far preferable to do as our Commission suggests and arrange selective top level meetings on a regional basis or according to the subject matter of the negotiations. The composition of these meetings should be such that the leading politicians taking part did not just express the positions of their own countries.

An initial preparatory meeting along these lines will probably be held at the beginning of next year at Mexico's instigation. In conjunction with the UN General Assembly's special session to be held early this autumn, this could be a good start towards reactivating the deadlocked North-South dialogue.

At the present time, many developing countries are indeed searching for lasting and reliable partners that do not make the demands that the great powers do and are not motivated by strategical calculations. Europe should be the very one to stretch out its hand to them and to work towards an equilibrium on which, for us in Europe, peace for the future and security of employment equally depend.

World Bank warns of dangers for developing States

The World Bank reported recently that the world's poor nations economically outperformed the industrialized countries during the past 10 years and, in fact, came close to equalling the impressive record of growth they posted during the 1960s.

But the World Bank's annual report for 1980 also notes that the costs of economic growth were often considerable in terms of a slackening in developmental momentum and amassed indebtedness. The Report adds, 'The formidable task of adjusting fully to the new economic environment remains the main challenge to the developing countries as the new decade begins.'

The annual report, reviewing the past 10 years of development, notes that aggregate annual growth in the developing world during the decade of the 1970s (1971-1980) was 5.3% as compared with 3.1% in the industrialized nations. Yearly growth rates in the 1960s were 5.6% and 5.0% for the developing and developed countries, respectively.

The gains in the aggregate growth of gross national product masked wide differences among various groupings of developing countries. Generally speaking, the richer developing countries fared best during the past 10 years. Thus, the middle-income countries of East Asia grew by 8% each year, while annual growth in the poor countries of sub-Saharan Africa was only 3%.

In *per capita* terms, the contrast during the decade was even more stark. According to the World Bank, incomes in the low-income countries of sub-Saharan Africa barely advanced at all during the decade (a 0.2% gain), while in East Asia, yearly *per capita* growth for the middle-income countries was 5.7%.

More dramatic yet was the gap in financial performance that emerged between th oil-exporting nations and the countries of sub-Saharan Africa.

The oil-producing countries in the Middle East alone are expected to earn revenues in 1980 of over $200 000 million; oil revenues totalled only about $11 000 million in 1970.

By contrast, the annual report provides details of a 'massive deterioration' of the external position of the economies of the countries of West Africa, a region that includes the countries of the Sahel—an area devastated by drought earlier in the decade.

The economic shocks of the decade of the 1970s—recession in the industrialized nations, oil price increases, and worsened terms of trade for the poorest nations—were successfully absorbed by many developing countries although the ways in which countries adjusted to the difficult economic environment differed.

Some developing countries—especially the more creditworthy, such as Korea and Brazil—maintained their levels of growth by borrowing abroad and using borrowed funds to sustain high levels of investment. In nominal terms, public and private indebtedness for all developing countries rose fivefold during the period, 1971-78, or from $64 000 million to $318 000 million.

But that debt was concentrated in a few developing countries only; of the $318 000 million in disbursed debt outstanding at the close of 1978, 55% was owed by only 10 countries, all but two of which—India and Indonesia—are in the middle-income category.

In other countries—India is the best example—the difficult period of adjustment was made easier by greater agricultural productivity. The early years of the decade (1972-74) were difficult for India due to a succession of unfavourable monsoons. But for the four-year period, 1976-79, good weather, combined with more extensive irrigation, a wider use of agricultural inputs, and improved extension services was responsible for growth in agricultural output of 4.4% yearly. India's agricultural advances enabled it to weather the severe drought of the past 12 months that led to a 12% decline in output, to 116 million tons.

Still other countries were helped in adjusting to the economic events of the 1970s by workers' remittances from the capital-surplus countries of the Middle East. At present, according to the annual report, about 2.7 million migrant workers from the states of South Asia, as well as from labour-exporting countries of the Middle East (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and the two Yemens), remit some $8 000 million yearly to their home countries, a total that exceeds gross aid flows to those countries.

These and other adjustments, however, were made to the economic conditions that prevailed in the middle of the decade and were undertaken prior to the oil price increases of 1979. Thus, the aggregate current account deficit of the oil-importing developing countries, which had risen from $6 700 million in 1973 to $39 600 million in 1975, and which then dropped to $27 100 million by 1978, rose once again to an estimated $43 100 million in 1979.

The annual report concludes its analysis of the past decade on a sombre note, saying that unless rich and poor nations, acknowledging that their fates are linked, work together in a variety of economic spheres, the world will be 'hard pressed to survive future decades . . . without social upheaval.'

The Bank reported that it made lending commitments of $7 644 million to 48 developing countries during the fiscal year that ended on June 30 last.

The annual report also says that commitments by the International Development Association (IDA), the Bank affiliate that lends funds at no interest to the poorest of the developing countries, totaled $3 838 million for the same 12-month period. Eighty-seven percent of IDA commitments were to countries with annual *per capita* gross national products of $360 or less.

Both amounts were records, and together, represented an increase of $1 471 million over 1979 amounts. In real terms—discounting inflation—Bank and IDA lending during 1980 was 6.7% above the previous year's total.

For the sixth year in a row. lending in support of agricultural and rural development projects drew the most support. The annual report estimates that as many as 4.8 million farm families may benefit directly from the agriculture projects approved during the fiscal year.

The annual report also reports that lending in support of oil, gas, and coal development rose fourfold in fiscal year 1980 as commitments rose to $457 million, up from $112 million in fiscal year 1979.

Principal borrowers from the Bank in fiscal year 1980 were Brazil ($695 million), Turkey ($600 million), Indonesia ($580 million), Korea ($544 million), and Thailand ($542 million).

Countries that borrowed from the IDA during fiscal year 1980 were India ($1 535 million), Bangladesh ($267 million) and Egypt (215 million).

The World Bank, which was established in 1945, is owned by the governments of 135 countries, including all Member States of the European Community.

It is, in fact, made up of three institutions: the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the International Development Association and the International Finance Corporation.

The common objective of these institutions is to help raise living standards in developing countries by channelling financial resources from developed countries to the developing world.

Its capital is subscribed by its member countries and it finances its lending operations primarily from its own borrowings in the world capital markets.

Stabex proves its worth in aiding poorest States

Stabex, the system introduced by the European Community to stabilize the export earnings of its Third World partners in the Lomé Convention, was of greatest benefit to the poorest of these countries during the first five years of its operation.

The Stabex fund was established as an innovatory part of the Convention to compensate the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries which are signatories of the trade and aid pact for losses of average export earnings on a schedule of products.

This fund, to which around £228 million was devoted for the five-year period of the first Convention, has proved to be an important factor in the economic forward planning of the recipient countries, many of whom are largely dependent on export earnings from a single product which is vulnerable to the vagaries of climate or the state of the world market.

Over the five-year period, all but £3 million of the money available was called on by 37 of the 59 ACP states. Of the total, 67 per cent went to the least-developed of these countries, which are not required to repay the money. The bulk of the ACP states fall into this category.

In the case of almost 70 per cent of the disbursements, local circumstances, in most cases natural disasters such as hurricances or drought, were the cause of the drop in exports. This confirms the particular value of a system of this kind for countries whose often limited resources are under constant threat from catastrophes of all kinds.

A case in point is the large-scale operation carried out in the Sudano-Sahelian region, from Senegal to Somalia, for which £ 103 million, representing 46 per cent of the total Stabex transfers, was allocated.

More extensive studies will have to be made to assess the system's economic impact. Already, however, it is apparent that Stabex transfers to certain countries have been very substantial in relation to the aid provided for in other forms under the Convention.

In a number of cases, such transfers have exceeded the total aid provided under the project-linked aid from the £ 1 800 million European Development Fund or which Stabex is a part.

In the course of his assessment during a press conference in Brussels, on the operation of Stabex, the Commissioner responsible for relations with the Third World, Claude Cheysson emphasized that if Stabex was to continue to play its primary role as accident insurance against natural disasters it was essential that progress be made in the stabilization of the commodity markets during the current round of the North-South dialogue between industrialized and developing countries.

Under the second Lomé Convention, which was signed last October and which runs for the next five years, the Stabex fund will have £ 330 million at its disposal.

IN BRIEF

Higher oil bill

The European Community's oil imports will cost a staggering £ 46 billion this year, Energy Commissioner Guido Brunner has estimated. Although imports have dropped considerably since the beginnng of the oil crisis (from 573 million tonnes in 1973 to 475 million last year)prices of crude have multiplied twelvefold in that period. An extra £ 30 billion to £ 60 billion of investments, equivalent to between 0.25% and 0.5% of GDP, will be needed in the next 10 years to keep oil imports at their present level.

EMPLOYMENT

The possibilities of working part time

More than 9 million European Community citizens currently work part time. About 90% of them are women, mostly married. But many more men and women in the Nine would like the chance to do a part time job. In recent surveys in Germany and Belgium, as many as 25% of full time workers questioned said they would prefer a working week of around 30 hours.

Demand for part time workers is also growing. The service industry and certain manufacturing industries which have come to rely extensively on part time labour are continually expanding.

Nevertheless, the rapid growth in part-time work has been accompanied by an undesirable side effect: the tendency to treat part time workers legally and socially less favourably than their full time counterparts.

Now a new set of proposals has been drawn up by the European Commission with a threefold objective in view:

■ to end any such discrimination between full and part time workers;

■ to create part time job opportunities for workers seeking them and

■ to promote various new forms of part time work.

To help fulfil these objectives, the Commission has made a number of suggestions to the Nine's governments, employment services and the two sides of industry. Chief among these suggestions are legal provisions to ensure equal treatment for full and part time workers.

This, the Commission says, should be secured by:

■ compiling lists of legal provisions or agreements on the social and financial aspects of part time work;

■ revising legal provisions or agreements that run counter to the principle of equal treatment for full and part time workers;

■ studying the extent to which social security systems (pensions, sickness and unemployment benefits etc) discriminate against part time workers;

■ revising tax laws that discriminate against part time workers;

■ revising rules in force in public and civil service with a view to offering a wider range of skilled jobs to people wishing to work part time.

The Commission also proposes a number of measures to improve the conditions of part time employment:

■ part time workers should have the right to an individual contract giving details of the number and distribution of working hours;

■ precise provisions should be drawn up governing overtime, rest periods etc;

■ priority should be granted to existing part time employees when full time vacanties occur in a firm;

■ part time workers should be recognized as enjoying the same rights of active and passive participation in a firm including participation in collective bargaining.

The Commission also suggests that public support should be extended to vocational training programmes for those seeking part time work, and that part time workers should have equal access to training opportunities offered by their company.

The role of employment services should be strengthened, the Commission feels, to help part time workers obtain equal treatment with full time workers, to upgrade part time work and to improve career prospects for part time workers:

The Commission would also like to see the Member States promoting new forms of part time work, by extending the range of jobs offered and introducing part time working in jobs involving higher qualifications and greater responsibility.

Retirement could also be phased in, by allowing employees to reduce gradually the number of hours they work. New forms of work organization could be brought in, such as the introduction of part time shifts and 'job sharing'.

However care must be taken, the Commission notes, to ensure that the creation of part time jobs does not replace that of new full time jobs.

Action at Community level should be contemplated to help back up moves in the Member States. Community action should aim at:

- establishing the principle of minimum thresholds for social security membership and hence benefits;
- introducing the principle of equal treatment under labour law between full and part time workers, covering the right to a minimum wage, equal promotion prospects, protection against dismissal and so on.

Finally, the Commission points to the role of part time work in the allocation of responsibilities between husband and wife. Family ties all too often restrict the wife to a part time job. The Commission feels that working hours should be gradually reduced and shared, and at the same time encouragement given to husbands and wives to share the non paid family duties on a more equitable basis.

The Commission's proposals on part time work are to be discussed shortly by the Community's Standing Committee on Employment.

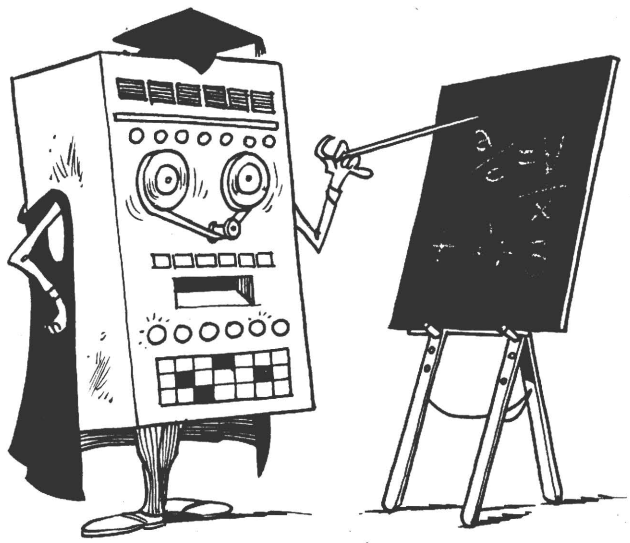
EDUCATION

Eurydice links policy-makers in the Nine

Education is one major area of policy making over which the European Community Member States keep a particularly close guard. And rightly so, since it is an important store of national history and culture.

But all agree on the benefits of sharing experience and projects in the educational field, and a new European Commission information network, codenamed Eurydice, has been set up to facilitate this exchange.

Eurydice forms a key part of the European Community education action programme, which was approved by the Council of Ministers in February 1976. It is a computerized communications system with one or two units in each Member



State and a central coordinating unit in Brussels.

The network will serve educational policy makers at Community and national level, and even in some cases at regional and local level. The Member States each have to decide exactly who will be able to make use of the system.

To begin with, Eurydice will be confined largely to handling information on the four policy themes selected in the Community education action programme. These are:

- easing the transition from school to working life;
- teaching and learning of foreign languages;
- education of migrants and their families;
- conditions of admission of students to higher education.

Eurydice will, however, be able to answer users' queries on other subjects and the European Commission and the Member States intend to review the above list of priority themes in the light of developing needs of Eurydice users.

The way the system works is simple. National users will pass request for information to their national unit using a specially designed request form. The national unit will then relay the request to as many other units in the other Member States as the user wants.

When the request involves a gathering of information from four or more Eurydice units it will be sent by the national unit to the central unit which will handle further communications and build up a Community wide picture on the topic, which will be stored with the central unit.

The Brussels unit is developing a data bank in which answers to requests and up-to-date material covering important comparative information will be stored. This data bank will be open to all Eurydice units.

The central unit will also act as the coordinator for the whole network and as a filter easing and regulating the flow of requests for information.

Access to the network through the central unit will be restricted to the Community institutions and the Community wide association of teachers interested in questions which relate directly to present or planned Commission or Community developments in education.

External experts working on Commission financed studies may also have access to the Eurydice network.

In addition to responding to requests, Eurydice will take every opportunity to exploit its growing stock of comparative information on education policy issues. The Commission intend to organize information seminars and special expert meetings on themes of common interest, and issue topical papers aimed at providing information on issues of importance to Eurydice users.

Eventually it is hoped that Eurydice will be linked into the Community's Euronet communication system, and links are already in place with the Strasbourg based Council of Europe to encourage a flow of educational information betwen the Nine and the rest of Europe.

Thus, Eurydice now provides the Community, as she once did Orpheus, with a cast iron reason for not looking back.

How to cut down on litter

One of the commonest forms of litter seen everywhere today must be the discarded soft drinks can. Non-returnable packaging, such as aluminium cans, no deposit bottles and paper and cardboard packaging of one sort or another are among the major litter offenders in the European Community today.

So, if you want to do your bit to help keep Europe clean, here are one or two indicators.

Metal cans and non-returnable glass bottles respectively are estimated to be seven and four times more likely to be dumped carelessly than returnable, deposit paid bottles.

Aluminium cans and non-returnable glass bottles are also the two major energy consumers amongst packaging forms. Although all glass bottles, including returnable types, require a good deal of energy to make them, some of this cost can be recouped by the bottles' rotation (i.e. return on deposit and re-use).

All in all, then, returnable glass bottles come out clear favourites as drinks containers, provided they can be rotated at least fives times.

The importance not only of rotating but of recycling glass is illustrated by the fact that the average European manages to use at least 35 kilos of glass bottles, jars and other containers each year.

This figure, which is based on a 1973 survey, is probably much higher now, given normal trends in our consumer society. What's more, the overall figure for glass containers—9 million tonnes—was only part of the 15 million tonnes of glass used in the Community that year.

It is reckoned that somewhere between a third and a half of all this glass could be recycled and already some progress is being made. However, the performance varies considerably from one Member State to another.

In the Federal Republic of Germany, 370 000 tonnes of glass were recycled in 1978, compared with only 150 000 tonnes four years earlier. The 1981 target is 450 000 tonnes. In France, 220 000 tonnes were recycled in 1978, 300 000 in 1979, and the forecast for 1983 is 600 000 tonnes.

In Belgium, 100 000 tonnes were recycled in 1978. In the United Kingdom, two glass manufacturers have decided to set up plants capable of recycling 50 000 tonnes of glass each. In the Netherlands, recycling programmes based on regional and local collection systems are underway. Other Member States also have schemes.

Recycling glass not only cuts down on litter, it also saves energy and raw materials. The glass industry believes that there is an energy saving of 2% for every 10% of glass recycled in place of newly-manufactured glass. In addition, 1.2 tonnes of raw materials are saved for every tonne of glass recycled.

Protecting workers from the dangers of asbestos

The health risks of prolonged exposure to asbestos have long been a cause for public concern. Although most of the ill-effects of exposure occur after long periods, relatively short term exposure can also cause disease, including asbestosis and a variety of carcinogenic tumours.

Most European Community Member States already have legislation in force seeking to limit the hazards of working with asbestos, but strict new European Commission proposals aim to do away with disparities between existing national laws and to reduce the degree to which workers are exposed.

The proposals, drawn up recently, call for a phasing out of asbestos, used primarily in the building, construction and engineering industries. They also seek tighter medical surveillance of workers using asbestos.

Wherever possible, the Commission recommends, asbestos should be replaced by suitable safer substitutes. The spraying of asbestos, in painting and flocking for example, should be banned, and the use of crocidolite, the nastiest form of asbestos should be avoided or governed by stringent safety checks.

The Commission measures include provisions for workers to have individual health records, containing details of work carried out, dates and duration of exposure to asbestos, the concentrations of asbestos to which the worker was exposed, the results of all tests that the worker has undergone and so on.

The record would be kept up to date by the doctor responsible for medical surveillance for a minimum period of thirty years following the end of exposure.

Health assessment of each worker would be repeated at least every year during the duration of exposure and once every three years after he ceases to work with asbestos.

The Community Member States would each set up a notification system for all firms manufacturing, storing, processing or disposing of asbestos, giving details of the amounts and types of asbestos used, the processes involved, the final products manufactured, buildings, plant and equipment used, the number of workers exposed, health, safety and hygiene measures taken and so on.

Workers in each factory would have access to the information submitted by their employer.

Factories would have to supply their employees with individual sets of protective clothing, which would have to be worn. Areas where asbestos is used should be clearly marked and access restricted. Employers should provide adequate cleaning and washing facilities for workers and take measures to ensure that dust from workclothes does not leave the factory.

Employees must also be fully instructed for the work that they are to do, including health and safety measures and the precautions to be taken.

Workers should also be informed when they are using or coming into contact with asbestos. All containers of asbestos, either as a raw material or in processed form, should be clearly marked 'Contains asbestos'.

Since the most common form of absorbtion of asbestos is by inhalation, strict measures are outlined to eliminate the dispersal of asbestos dust and fibres. Machinery should be closed wherever possible, and sealed containers should be used.

Manual handling of raw asbestos would be banned except where absolutely unavoidable and all buildings and equipment involved in the manufacture or processing of asbestos would be suitably designed and regularly cleaned and maintained.

The Commission also wants to make regular air sampling and analysis compulsory in factories and to set limits for the amount of asbestos dust permitted per cubic metre of air.

If the Council of Ministers gives the go-ahead to the Commission plan, which is the latests step in the Community's Safety and Health at Work action programme, firms will have until January 1985 to adapt to its requirements.

LIFESTYLE

There is no place like home

An Englishman's home may be his castle, as the old saying goes, but he is less likely to have one than a Belgian, Dane, German or Frenchman, according to figures released by the United Nations.

Altogether, there are some 96 million dwellings in the European Community housing nearly 260 million Europeans. Belgium has the healthiest looking record in terms of dwelling per head of population with a ratio of 1 to 2.48 people. Close behind come Denmark (1 to 2.49) and Germany (1 to 2.51). Those house-proud Englishmen have to put up with fifth position, and one 'castle' to every 2.68 of them. The French, despite being 2.5 million fewer, have 200 000 more roofs to go round.

Lowest down the scale came the Netherlands (1 to 3.04), Italy (1 to 3.05) and Ireland (1 to 3.50), a factor that could be explained by bigger families. Or perhaps they are just more sociable!

THE INSTITUTIONS

Council gets new Secretary-General

Niels Ersboll, the Danish State Secretary for Foreign Economic Affairs and Chairman of the Governing Board of the International Energy Agency, has been appointed Secretary General of the Community's Council of Ministers.

He will be replacing Luxembourger Nicolas Hommel, who is due to retire in early October after seven years in the post.

Mr Ersboll, whose appointment was officially approved by the Nine's Foreign Ministers in mid September, is no stranger to Brussels or the Community.

He was the Danish ambassador to the Community from 1973 to 1977, before which he was director of the secretariat for European Economic Affairs in the Foreign Affairs Ministry for six years.

He has also had experience of a number of other organizations including EFTA, NATO and GATT.

Solid yeomen

The British have by far the largest farms in the Community, according to recently published Commission figures. The average British holding expressed in hectares of utilized agricultural area is 58, more than double the Community average of 26. The French figure is 31 ha, Luxembourg 28, Ireland and Denmark 27, Germany 21, Belgium 16, the Netherlands 15 and Italy 11.

Wedding bells ring out across Europe's frontiers

The Marriage Bureau is the more familiar and perhaps apt way by which the Brussels-based Business Cooperation Centre is widely known. Set up in 1973 to foster contacts between small and medium-sized companies in the Community, the Bureau has gone from strength to strength.

Testament to its success comes with the publication of the latest report describing the activities during 1978 and 1979.

In these two years, 1 018 firms drew on the Bureau's wide experience, requesting particular items of information on the regulations that had to be met before they could do business in another Community country.

During the same period, just over 200 companies approached the Bureau asking it to help them to find partners in other Community countries so that thet could set up joint ventures or similar forms of cooperation.

These requests were discreetly advertised, bringing in a massive 2 800 replies and leading to 180 companies getting into contact with each other.

Even when this preliminary stage is over, the Bureau still offers its services to those firms which may not have or be able to afford the necessary legal or administrative expertise to conclude an agreement.

During the two years, the Bureau has been notified of 36 cooperation agreements, involving two or more companies from different Community countries.

Irish and German footwear firms have got together, for instance, to specialize in their range of products, while British and French consulting engineers have agreed to share their projects.

One of the Bureau's most impressive successes has been the agreement between 10 bronze founders—six of them in the Community—to meet periodically to exchange technical ideas and carry out joint marketing of their products.

Since 1974, it has been British firms which have shown the greatest interest in the Centre's work. Sixty-six of them are engaged in bilateral cooperation with likeminded partners in other Community countries.

No far behind come the French and the Germans, each of whom have 55 firms involved, while Luxembourg has been the least adventurous—only 1 company has successfully reached a bilateral cooperation agreement.

A total 21 Belgian firms have used the Centre's facilities, while the figures for other Community countries are: Italy (20), the Netherlands (16), Ireland (9), Denmark (8).

Commenting on these various contacts, the report notes that it is striking the considerable number of service undertakings which are involved.

Back in 1977, the Bureau was given the additional powers of being able to initiate projects on its own, without having to first wait until it was contacted by individual firms.

It decided that banks were an obvious area in which to show an interest, especially as one of the ways the independent regional or medium-sized banks could maintain their independence in the face of the cooperation groupings being established by the major banks was to complement each other.

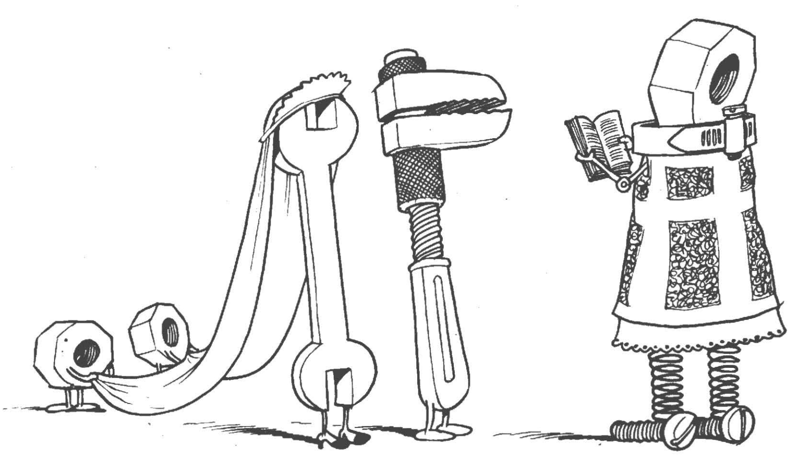
After a number of preparatory contacts, the Centre presided over the constitution of the European Group of Banks consisting of 10 medium-sized banks from six Community countries with 525 branches employing 6 500 people.

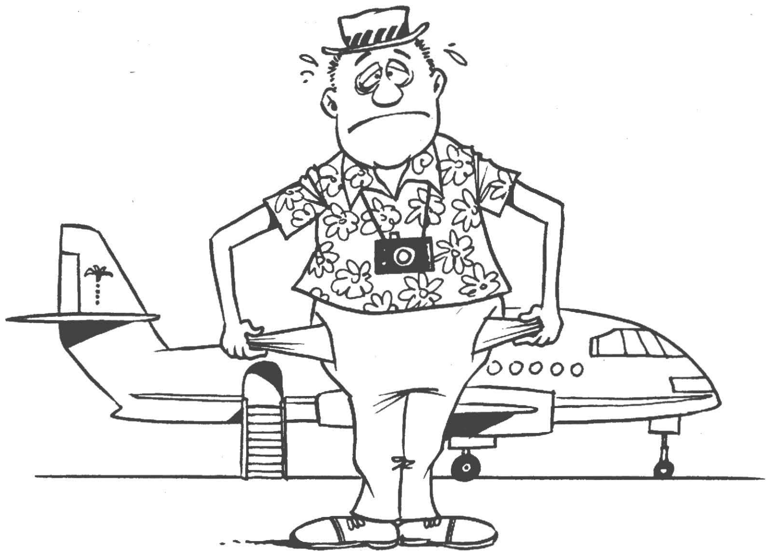
Possible areas of cooperation are: opening of accounts and credit lines on a basis of reciprocity; exchange of trainees; mutual help in customer service and exchange of experience.

Tackling another area, the Bureau arranged a number of meetings between the organizers of the main European trade fairs for to avoid overlapping dates; to promote bilateral cooperation between the fairs, and to enable them to adopt similar definitions of the products to be admitted for exhibition.

Although the European market for medical and hospital equipment is becoming increasingly saturated, overseas markets are continuing to expand. The Centre has managed to bring together a number of small and medium-sized firms in this sector with the aim of establishing a large-scale export group.

A similar venture has ben launched for the manufacturers of equipment used in luxury hotels and offices. The group, which includes companies making carpets, furnishings, linen, chinaware etc.) will be able to form a group for overseas export marketing, initially in North America.





Cheap flights: Laker may appeal to the European Court

Sir Freddie Laker, head of Laker Airways, has threatened once again to appeal to the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg if his bid to introduce cut-price services on a number of European routes is blocked by the British Civil Aviation Authority.

His move comes at a time when the European Commission, which has already produced a Green Paper setting out some of its ideas, is working on detailed proposals for cheaper and more flexible air fares in Europe.

Several months ago Sir Freddie applied to the Civil Aviation Authority for permission to introduce cheap fares on flights between London's Gatwick airport and 35 European cities. He proposed tickets that would cost well under half normal scheduled rates for which no reservations would be needed.

Before making his application, he travelled to Brussels for talks with Transport Commissioner Richard Burke who gave broad backing to the plan. However, it was turned down by the Civil Aviation Authority and Sir Freddie is now appealing. Last month he was at the European Parliament in Strasbourg canvassing support.

If he is not successful, he plans to take his fight to the European Court because he believes that the International Air Transport Authority (IATA), to which the major airlines belong and which is the main tariff-regulating body, is not acting in accordance with the European Community's fair-trading laws.

If he is successful, the British Government would then have to approach other European governments for their support. Stiff opposition is expected from the national airlines, most of which are state-owned, although some of them have already taken anticipatory action by cutting fares on certain routes.

The right result for Sir Freddie would open up the prospect of a price-cutting war similar to that which was sparked off three years ago when Laker Airways introduced cheap, no-frills flights across the Atlantic.

Sir Freddie's trip to Strasbourg was to address a group called 'Fight for the Freedom of the Skies' which is chaired by a British member of the European Parliament, Lord Bethell.

The group released a set of tables making comparisons between fares charged by IATA airlines and those charged by Laker Airways and other cut-price operators on selected flights from the main airports in each of the Community Member States.

For example, it claimed that the Laker fare from London to New York worked out at 2.66 pence per mile, while the IATA fare from London to Munich came to 18.01 pence. Similarly, the Transamerica fare from Shannon to New York was 4.2 pence per mile, while the IATA fare from Dublin to Frankfurt was 17.67 pence.

Lord Bethell has sent a complaint about European air fares to the Commission, citing Article 85 of the Treaty of Rome which, among other things, prohibits agreements between companies designed to restrict competition and thus limit consumer choice.

Paris plays host to top-level conference

A major conference on the subject of 'the economic power of the consumer' is being held in Paris on October 15-17. Among the main speakers will be Consumer Affairs Commissioner Richard Burke.

The first day, which will be chaired by Michel Carpentier, the Commission's Director-General for Consumer Affairs, will be devoted to a discussion of the effectiveness of consumer association's in the Community.

The second day, to be chaired by Christiane Scrivener, former French Secretary of State for Consumer Affairs and now a member of the European Parliament, will, concentrate on consumer information, training and education.

On the third day, the conference, which is being organized by René Monory, the French Economy Minister, will take a look at the dialogue betwen business and consumer representatives.

Money for coal

Capital investment in the Community's coalmining industry topped 1 billion European Units of Account last year. The total of 1.16 billion EUA (approx. £700 million) represents a 25 per cent increase on the previous year. The biggest investment was in the United Kingdom (£495 million).

Community and Brazil forge new links

The European Community and Brazil have signed an economic cooperation agreement designed to strengthen links between them that have existed formally since 1974.

The two sides have entered into a five-year agreement in which they have accorded one another most-favoured-nation treatment and in which they have created a framework for closer economic cooperation.

This provides for the establishment of a joint committee which will meet twice a year to explore ways of dveloping and diversifying trade, which last year was worth in the region of $7 700 million, a fourfold increase in the decade.

The agreement also envisages scientific and technological cooperation, as well as cooperation in the fields of energy and agriculture. Ways of promoting favourable conditions for investment will also be sought out.

At the signing ceremony in Brussels, the President-in-Office of the Council of Ministers, Luxembourg Foreign Minister, Gaston Thorn said that the accord was an indication of the importance which the Community attached to developing closer links with Latin America.

He said that the Community was keen to develop these links by means of bilateral, regional or multilateral agreements and he hoped that this effort would help the process of democratization in Latin America.

The Brazilian Foreign Minister Ramiro Saraiva Guerreiro said that Brazilians were fully aware of the historical significance of the progress towards European integration.

'We regard this process as an eloquent expression of the richness and diversity of the western world,' he said, 'and we therefore cannot but welcome Europe's increasing role as an element of stability and moderation in a world where renewed tensions threaten the maintenance of peace.'

Progress on Lomé talks with Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe and the European Commission have almost completed negotiations for the country's membership of the Lomé Convention—the aid and trade agreement between the Community and 59 African, Caribbean and Pacific countries.

The terms being offered to the new Salisbury government were agreed by the Nine's Foreign Ministers in mid-September.

The Nine are prepared to allow Zimbabwe to export up to 25 000 tonnes of sugar a year to the Community at guaranteed prices, although this is below the figure originally being sought by the Zimbabwean Prime Minister, Mr Mugabe.

But with world sugar prices currently higher than those in the Community, the country is unlikely to be exporting any significant quantities in the near future.

The Nine also agreed to imports of 8 100 tonnes of beef at a reduced levy—a concession already granted to Botswana, Kenya, Swaziland and Madagascar. But they stipulated that this would have to be reviewed after two years.

The concession is generally considered as being more symbolic than practical at the moment, since the country has foot and mouth disease and is unable to export its cattle. But once this is under control it is estimated it will have an export potential of around 40 000 tonnes a year.

Zimbabwe will also be allowed to export its tobacco to the Community although the Nine have indicated that they are prepared to introduce any necessary safeguards if the trade is such that producers in Italy, who grow the same leaf, are being harmed.

Financially, the Community is ready to give Zimbabwe around t 52 million (86 million European units of account) over the next four years towards a number of projects that should help stimulate the country's economic growth.

The September meeting also gave Foreign Ministers their first opportunity to consider the Community's relations with Turkey after the military takeover.
Earlier this year the Community decided to step up its links with Turkey, which stretch back to 1963, by granting it financial aid to the tune of around £372 million (620 million Eua), gradually abolishing duties on Turkish agricultural products coming to Europe and granting improved status for Turkish workers in the Community.

The Ministers made it clear that they did not intend to make any snap judgement on the changed situation in the country, but they issued a short statement in which they indicated they were following events with concern.

They also took note of the army leaders' pledge to restore democracy.

A few days earlier the Commission had issued a statement in a similar vein, in which it expressed 'the strong hope that human rights' would be fully respected and democratic institutions quickly restored.

Continuing their examination of events elsewhere in the world, the Ministers were informed by the Commission's incoming President, Luxembourg's Foreign Minister Gaston Thorn, of the results of his talks over the summer with the various parties interested in the Community's attempt to launch a peace initiative in the Middle East.

They have now asked senior officials to study some of the issues contained in the declaration agreed by Heads of State and Government in Venice in June. These are expected to include the exact definition of the term 'self-determination', the geographical limits to the Palestinian homeland and the guarantees to Israel's territorial security.

More power

The production of nuclear power in the European Community rose by 10.3% last year. This boosted nuclear power's contribution to total electrical energy to 10.8% instead of 10.5% in 1978.

Strategy for the Eighties outlined in GATT report

To have been alive during the turbulent decade of the 1970s meant absorbing a valuable survival course in economics. The world during that period learned many new lessons on the functioning of the national and international economic systems.

First the world went through an era of monetary instability, then a period of energy scarcity followed by the scourge of inflation and high unemployment. Having learned to face up to problems like balance of payments and protectionism, the public is now being alerted by GATT, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade to the need for governments to develop sound investment policies to face the emerging economic challenges of the future.

GATT is a post-war creation based in Geneva which was established to try to define and enforce rules of conduct for international trade in order to avoid a repetition of the disorganized cut-throat competition and trade wars that worsened the world-wide depression of the 1930s.

GATT has been the forum of discussion for such major negotiations as the Kennedy Round of the 1960s and the Tokyo Round of the 1970s which helped reduce many obstacles to world trade.

In a world where every country is increasingly dependent on its neighbours as both customer and supplier, a lowering of barriers has become widely accepted as an important priority despite sporadic application of limited quotas, tariffs or other obstacles.

This year's GATT annual report on the prospects for world trade is another textbook in global economics. The survey, which looks at both the past and makes forecasts for the future, notes that the volume of world trade increased by 6 per cent in 1979 but is expected to slow down considerably to between 2 and 3 per cent growth this year.

However, when measured in dollar terms, world trade expanded by about 25 per cent last year, reflecting a surge in inflation and also a fall in the value of the dollar relative to other currencies.

It's no secret, but the report also underlines the importance of oil in total world commerce. In the first half of 1980, price increases in dollar terms in the price of oil represented a 100 per cent jump compared with the same period last year.

These price rises alone account for the 70-per cent increase in value of exports from the oil-producing countries during the first half of 1980, although the actual volume of these oil exports in fact declined. GATT expects the accounts of the oil-producing countries to rise to 115 thousand million dollars in 1980 from the 68 thousand million-dollar surplus in 1979.

In contrast to this two-year surplus of about 184 thousand million dollars for the oil countries, industrialized countries, including the nine European Community countries, will suffer payments deficits amounting to some 77 thousand million dollars in 1979-80 and the developing countries which do not produce oil will be facing deficits of 112 thousand million dollars during the same period.

From the report, it emerges clearly that 1979 and the major oil price increases during that period were a historic turning point in a world trade picture that seemed to be lifting itself out of the slump provoked by the first oil crisis of 1973-74.

For instance for that period, industrialized countries like the Community, the United States and Japan, had largely succeeded in erasing the large increases in their oil bills by generating new exports in the oil-producing and developing countries. But the new oil increases of 1979 and 1980 have ushered in another significant new era of challenge to again offset rising oil import costs.

What is not generally known, however—and it is contained in the report—is that the drive to export manufactured goods and services such as insurance and technological know-how by the industrialized countries was so sizeable that this trade, and not the purchase of oil, was the largest debt registered by the struggling developing world.

Probably the biggest challenge now facing the industrialized nations is the need, according to the GATT report, to shift investment plans to high-productivity sophisticated manufactured goods and to relax efforts to prop up and shield traditional industries such as textiles and other problems sectors. This adjustment to what is termed a process of 'de-industrialization' is yet another argument against costly protectionist policies that seek to forestall the oncoming shifts in competition.

The report believes that the industrial slump in many of the major developed economies is a manifestation of the need for such structural adjustment which had been building up for the past 10 or 15 years but which had been insufficiently recognized before the recent economic shocks.

It notes that investment in recent years had been maintained relatively stable in many industrial countries and that much of this financing had been spent on new labour-saving technology. This should result in the building up of new industries with high growth rates, creating higher-wage jobs to replace those lost in the traditional industries.

For instance, the report outlines the fact that the so-called third sector, meaning service industries instead of older manufacturing activities, had shown a faster rate of growth in employment in recent years which could provide signs of encouragement about the future. The key, according to the report, will be the need to maintain dynamic and sound investment policies to respond to these new industrial and energy realities.

IN BRIEF

Z to A

More than 10 million people in the European Community are illiterate or cannot count, according to the European Youth Forum. The Forum, which represents national youth organisations of the nine Member States at Community level, estimates that this number of people have escaped the traditional school system. As a result, they do not have sufficient basic competence in reading, writing and arithmetic to enable them to play a real part in society. The Forum wants the European Commission to carry out an intensive study of this problem and the Forum itself intends to launch a campaign against illiteracy.

THE NEWS AT A GLANCE

Support for Poland

The European Parliament passed a resolution at its September session in Strasbourg congratulating the Polish workers on the success of their recent strike action. The Parliament supported their right to strike and to form free trade unions. It added that only the Polish people had the right to decide the future of Poland.

Facilitating development

Italy is to receive a loan of around £18 million from the resources of the Ortoli Facility to help develop oil and gas deposits and improve the telecommunications network. The 10-year loan qualifies for a 3 per cent interest subsidy under the terms of Italy's membership of the European Monetary System, thus reducing the effective rate to 7.9 per cent.

Freer transfers

Commissioner Etienne Davignon, told the European Parliament recently that he has received assurances from the national football federations of the Nine that obstacles to the transfer of footballers from one country to another will be gradually abolished. The Commission is currently drawing up a report on the rights of professional footballers throughout the Community.

More jobless

Unemployment in the Community rose by 3 per cent between the end of July and the end of August. This rise brought the total to 6.8 million. Seasonally-corrected figures show that this is not simply the usual rise for the time of year when unemployment figures are swelled by school-leavers.

For the regions

The European Commission has approved a new series of grants from the Regional Fund totalling around £115 million. The recipient countries are the United Kingdom (£13 million), Ireland (£1.6 million), Belgium, Denmark, Germany and Italy. Since it was set up in 1975, the Fund has disbursed around £590 million.

A gap to fill

The United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) has estimated that there are 26 countries in Africa which will require 2.4 million tonnes of food aid during the coming year. At present, the FAO has pledges from donor countries amounting to a mere 500 000 tonnes and its Director-General, Edouard Saouma, has sent out an urgent appeal for more. The contributions of the Community countries to the FAO's budget for 1980-81 amount to just over 32 per cent of the total, compared with 25 per cent for the United States and just under 12 per cent for Japan.

Coup condemned

The European Parliament has condemned the recent coup d'état in Bolivia and has called on the nine Community Member States to withold recognition from the new regime and to suspend all aid. The resolution was supported by Vice-President Lorenzo Natali on behalf of the Commission.

More humane

The European Commission has said in reply to a European Parliamentarian's question that it is satisfied that Community legislation on the stunning of animals before slaughter is now being observed correctly by all nine Member States.

Links preserved

A move by the Communist and Allies Group to have the Community break off its relations with Turkey as long as the military junta remains in power was defeated by the European Parliament during its September session, held in the week following the fall of the Demirel government. The Parliament has demanded a report from the Council of Ministers on the implications of the coup d'état for the Community's association agreement with Turkey and will hold a full debate during its November session. The Community's association agreement with Greece was frozen during the seven-year regime of the colonels.

PUBLICATIONS

Collection of the agreements concluded by the European Communities, Commission of the European Communities.

The major work of reference brings together the full texts of agreements made by the European Communities with non-member states or with other bodies governed by international law, particularly international organizations, and of the Community Acts concluding those agreements.

'Agreements' in this context means agreements governed by international law whether contained in a single instrument or two or more related instruments, and whatever particular titles they may have.

The scale of their economic and commercial capacity has made the European Communities an important partner on the world scene. This work bears witness also to the outward looking attitude of the Institutions, and the breadth and diversity of the external activity of the Communities in the areas covered by the treaties establishing them.

The Collection comprises five basic volumes containing the texts of all the agreements in force at 31 December 1975, amendments made to those texts before that date being referred to in the foodnotes or given after the text of the agreement concerned.
The work is kept up-to-date by Annual Supplements, of which the first (Volume 6, 1976) and the second (Volume 7, 1977) have been published: the first includes among other documents the full texts of the ACP-CEE Convention of Lomé, concluded on behalf of the Communities on 30 January 1976.

The Collection may be bought as a complete set: individual volumes may also be purchased separately.
Prices for the complete basic set (Vol. 1-5): £157 or $276.
Prices for individual volumes
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Prices for the Annual Supplement 1976 (Vol. 6): £31.00 or $68.00.
Prices for the Annual Supplement 1977 (Vol. 7): £37.80 or $85.50.

FOCUS

Energy crisis may curb our quest for the exotic

Despite the world economic recession, there seems to be no let-up in enthusiasm for foreign travel. Even though the energy crisis has pushed up fares, there is no shortage of people with money to spend on a holiday abroad.

This emerges clearly from the OECD's annual survey of the tourism industry. And the European Community countries, all of which are members of OECD, are no exception to the general rule.

On the OECD's chart of money earned by its member countries and spent by their nationals in 1979, only two minuses appear. The Irish earned 5.9 per cent less from visiting tourists and Turks spent 7.8 per cent less abroad.

The biggest beneficiary of man's earnest quest for something different was Community-candidate Portugal, where tourism receipts shot up by a spectacular 58.8 per cent. Its Iberian neighbours the Spanish, seem to be fleeing from the northern hordes who flock to their beaches every summer. Spaniards spent 62.6 per cent more abroad last year than they did in 1978.

Apart from Ireland, all Community countries earned more from tourism last year. But apart from Italy, Belgium and Luxembourg, all saw their nationals increase their holiday spending abroad at a faster rate than visiting foreigners spent.

In terms of percentage increase, the biggest spenders among Community citizens were the British, who bumped up their holiday budgets by 51 per cent. The Irish were not far behind, managing to spend 47 per cent more.

Overall, tourism receipts in the OECD countries amounted to a staggering $62 000 million, which was an increase of 19 per cent. Expenditure by nationals of OECD countries topped that by $4 000 million, which was an increase of 22 per cent.

However, these seemingly high increases are largely a reflection of continuing inflation, together with the fact that the dollar, which the OECD uses for its bookeeping, has depreciated against many currencies.

It will probably come as no surprise to learn that the Gerdans were the most enthusiastic spenders, parting with almost $18 000 million to enjoy the sunshine, sea breezes and ski slopes away from home. The French, and British, with reasonably comparable numbers of potential spenders, could only manage about one-third of that figure.

Outside the Community, those indefatigable globe-trotters the Americans generated the most income for the travel agents, the air and shipping lines, and foreign hotels and restaurants. The increasingly ubiquitous Japanese are continuing to make up for lost time.

While tourism as a money-spinner appears to be in a tolerably healthy condition in the Community and in the other OECD countries, the OECD warns that both governments and the travel trade will have to keep a very close eye on the energy situation.

It points out that the price of oil, currently the indispensable ingredient in the transporting, heating and cooling of tourists, has risen by 135 per cent since the end of 1978. On top of this, uncertainties about future supplies and the risk of further unforseeable price rises do not create the best climate for expansion in the tourist industry in the near future.

While the OECD concedes that, in contrast to 20 years ago, a large number of the citizens of its member countries have experience of foreign travel and wants to continue that experience, they have in turn become more demanding and more careful about the way they spend their money.

It concludes: 'The unfavourable economic situation does not suppress people's need to travel as tourism, particularly tourism abroad, has been an integral part of the way of life in OECD member countries for many years. The habits acquired by a large part of the population provide a sufficiently strong basis to enable the tourism sector to adapt, in a difficult period, to new relationships between prices and services'.

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